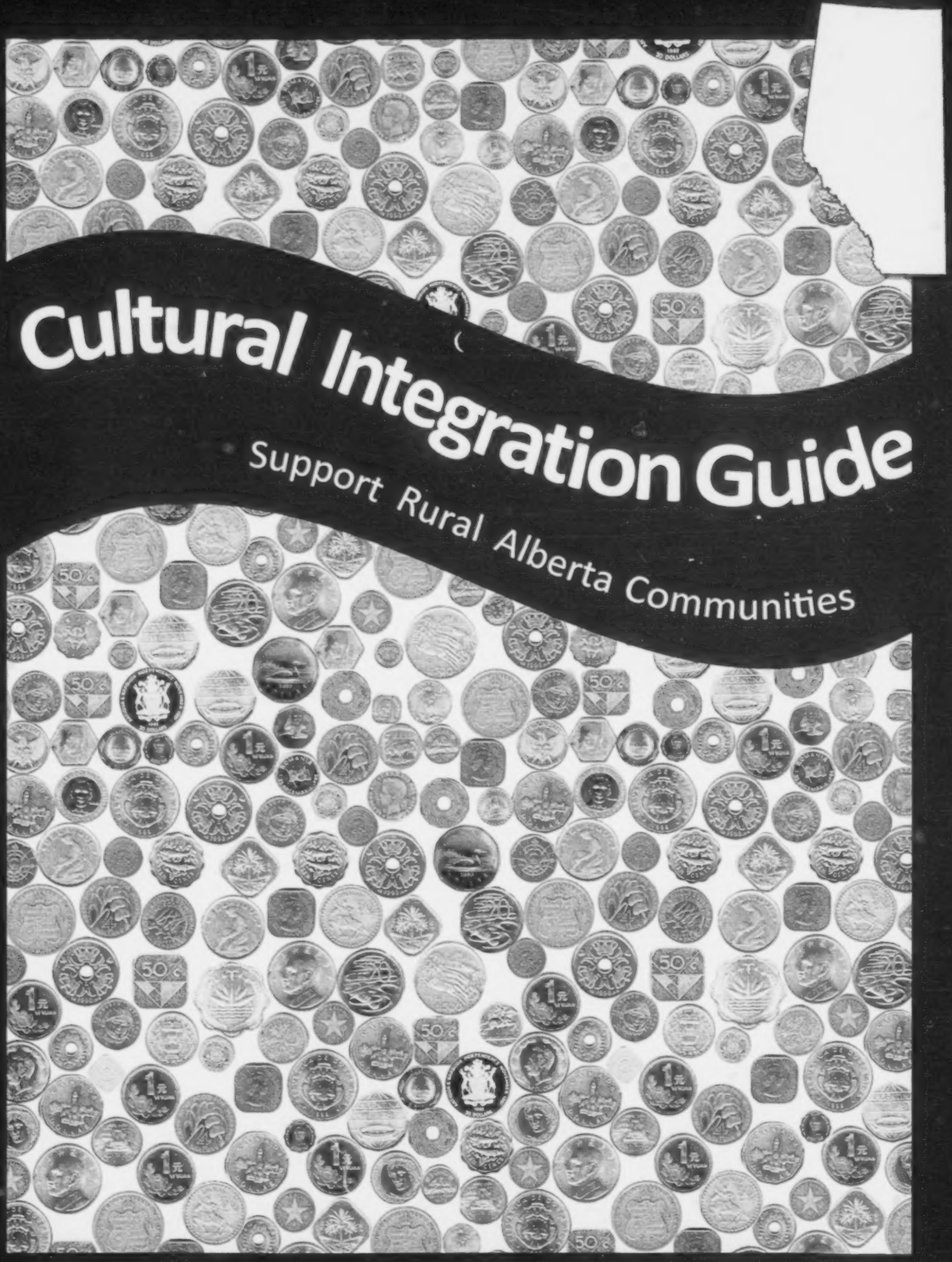

Cultural Integration Guide

Support Rural Alberta Communities

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For copyright information, contact:
Alberta Employment and Immigration
Labour Attraction Branch
Telephone: 780-427-6028
Fax: 780-422-0249
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Government of Alberta

Alberta

RPAP
The Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan

Introduction

This manual has been developed to accompany the corresponding cultural integration workshop, delivered by The Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan (RPAP).

The objective of the workshop is to facilitate an increased understanding of the challenges that International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and their families experience when settling in rural Alberta.

As involved community members, there are a number of reasons why supporting your IMGs and their family members may be important to you.

- You are a concerned citizen that cares about the quality of healthcare in your town
- Community pride and desire to contribute
- Helping others makes you feel good
- **Retention of your IMG**

It is important to note that despite your best efforts and intentions, and even if you follow every piece of advice offered in this manual and workshop, the retention of your community IMGs is never guaranteed. Even when working to support your IMG and their family to make integration into your community as smooth as possible, IMGs and their families may decide to leave. The factors that impact their decision may include some which you as a community member or your local Recruitment and Retention (R&R) committee, may not be able to influence.

Generally speaking, there are two main reasons why an IMG and their family may decide not to stay in your community. The family members may not be happy with certain aspects of the community, or the IMG is not happy in his or her workplace.

Challenges within the workplace are one set of factors which will not likely be able to be influenced by the larger community. However, the community can have an impact when challenges felt by the IMG and his or her family are related to aspects of the community at large. Thus, it is important to focus on those challenges and factors where you may have an influence.

This manual and workshop are tools to help you influence the areas where you or your R&R committee can have an impact.

Notes

Layout of the Manual

The manual is divided into the following sections:

- Cultural Integration Workshop objectives and outline
- Descriptions of various cultural concepts
- Note pages: How to support IMGs and their families
- Information about IMG source countries

A) Cultural Integration Workshop objectives and outline:

The cultural integration workshop is an opportunity for rural Alberta communities to increase their knowledge and enhance their skills. The workshop contains a variety of group activities, discussions and participatory exercises that will provide participants with a meaningful experience and deeper understanding of some of the challenges that IMGs and their families experience when they come to rural Alberta communities.

FUN is incorporated into each of these elements, making them memorable and engaging.

By the end of this workshop, participants will:

- Have an increased understanding of cultural differences and the impact they can have on IMGs and their families, both in their professional life as well as personal life
- Learn how to adjust their behaviour and communication style so they can minimize misunderstandings and have effective interactions with IMGs and their families, both in and outside of work
- Have the knowledge and tools to enhance the support they provide to IMGs and their families at various phases of their settlement
- Understand when and where they can make a difference and have a positive impact on IMGs and their families
- Feel empowered to build a culturally inclusive community

B) Descriptions of various cultural concepts:

The cultural concepts explored in this manual are:

- Definitions of culture
- Hierarchy
- Communication
- Individualism

Notes

C) Notes pages: How to support IMGs and their families

This manual accompanies open discussions throughout the workshop about what things you can do to minimize cultural misunderstandings and maximize the support extended to IMGs and their families. These designated pages are conveniently located throughout the manual for you to note tips and suggestions as well as any other information that is meaningful to you and/or your R&R committee.

D) Information about IMG source countries

The top ten countries of origin for IMGs coming to rural Alberta as identified by the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta are:

- Australia
- Egypt
- India
- Ireland
- Libya
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- South Africa
- United Kingdom
- United States

Appendix A of this manual features each of these countries, providing detailed information on demographics, culture, customs, food and religion, to name a few. This information will give you a head start when preparing for the arrival of a new IMG.

Country information for IMG source countries can be found in Appendix A.

Notes

What is this thing we call culture?

What does the word **culture** mean to you?

_____

_____

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_____

Definitions:

The following are some definitions of culture put forth by anthropologists and sociologists:

- Culture is the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour
- Culture is a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another
- Culture is a way of life for a group of people - the behaviours, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept- generally without thinking about them - and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next

What do these definitions have in common? How do you define culture?

_____

_____

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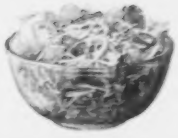
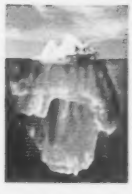
Notes

Metaphors for culture:

Jelly Beans – All jelly beans in the jar are diverse; not just one colour or flavour

Mixed Salad - Immigrant cultures maintain their original integrity in the new national salad





Iceberg - There are aspects of culture that can be seen above the water line. For example, clothing, language, food and music are things we *observe.* There are aspects of culture that are hidden below the water line. For example, thoughts, values, concept of time and relationship dynamics are things we *cannot observe*

Note that the words **race** and **culture** do not mean the same thing. **Race** refers to one's roots and heritage. **Culture** refers to behaviours, beliefs and values characteristic of a given group. **Racism** is the belief that certain human traits make one group more superior than another. A value judgement is placed whereby some groups are deemed superior and others inferior.

There is no value judgement made when we talk about culture. We can talk about cultural differences between different groups of people without placing judgement on right, wrong, superior or inferior.

Generalizations and stereotypes

It is important to distinguish between generalizations and stereotypes. Generalizations are based on group observation while stereotypes are based on assumption.

Example: The statement "Bollywood movies are an important part of Indian culture" is a **generalization**. It is based on a large sample of a group. The statement "All Indian people watch Bollywood movies" is a **stereotype**. It is an assumption that all people in the group are the same.

The information in this manual and workshop is based on generalizations, as there are several factors which influence individual behaviour. How you apply the information learned today needs to be based on your own evaluation of the person and the situation.

Notes

Hierarchy

Hierarchy is the degree to which one person is more or less powerful than another, in a society where it is accepted that power is unevenly distributed.

Hierarchy is a cultural dimension that pervades all aspects of society. In this manual we take a look at hierarchy differences for the top ten countries of origin that IMGs are coming from; how these differences impact our interactions with others; and what we can do to minimize cultural misunderstandings when interacting with people from different parts of the world.

In hierarchical countries, hierarchy is **everywhere.** It impacts every interaction between people across all aspects of life. In societies such as Canada that practice more equality, there is not the same variance between different layers of power.

Hierarchy

- Accomplishments and Credentials/Status
- Technical Skills and Soft Skills
- Initiative
- Expectations of the School System

Accomplishments and credentials

People from hierarchical countries largely define themselves through their accomplishments and credentials.

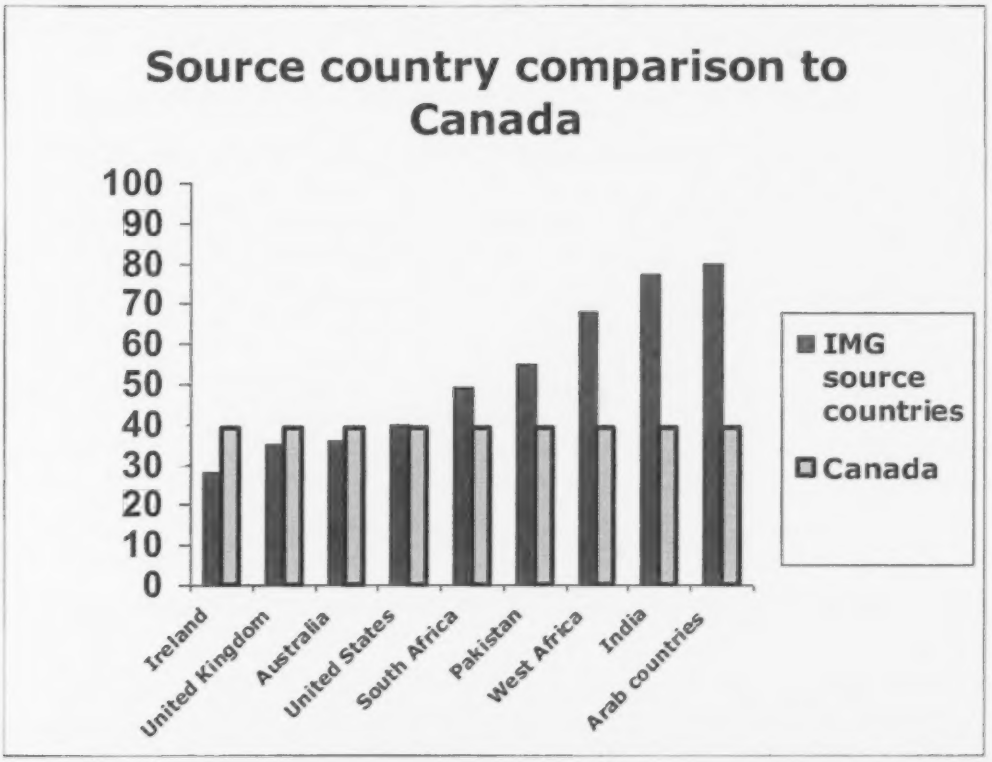
- Academic (what school they went to and how many degrees they have)
- Professional (title, position, company, number of promotions)
- Hierarchy of learning institutions

For example, upon meeting someone for the first time, it is common for hierarchical people to talk about how many degrees they have and what university they graduated from.

The **cultural difference** is that the value placed on education is much higher in hierarchical countries than it is in non-hierarchical countries. As a result, people living in hierarchical countries are very academic focused and therefore extremely proud of their academic accomplishments.

Notes

Figure 1: Hierarchy scores from IMG source countries and Canada



* Arab countries include **Egypt**, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, **Libya**, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. **Egypt** and **Libya** are two of the top ten countries for IMGs to rural Alberta.

* West African countries include Ghana, **Nigeria** and Sierra Leone. **Nigeria** is one of the top ten source countries for IMGs to rural Alberta.

The higher the score is, the more hierarchical the country. The lower the score is, the less hierarchical the country. There is no right or wrong answer on this scale.

Notes

Technical skills and Soft skills

Technical skills refer to the job specific knowledge and training that is necessary to perform a given job. For example, you need a specific set of skills to be a dentist. You need to know how to operate equipment, how to diagnose and treat patients and how to perform standard dental procedures, to name a few. These skills are obtained through applied schooling and training.

Soft skills on the other hand, are not as easily defined. Loosely put, soft skills are transferable across a number of professions and refer to those skills that involve interacting with people. Consider the following list of skills:

- Interpersonal skills (attitude, rapport with others)
- Bedside manner
- Communication skills
- Delivering feedback to others
- Relationship building
- Negotiation skills
- People management

Going back to our example of a dentist, you may not **need** these soft skills to practice dentistry. However, you are likely to experience greater success and likeability if you have some of these soft skills because Canada is a country that values soft skills.

The **cultural difference** is that the value placed on technical skills is much higher in hierarchical countries than it is in non-hierarchical countries. As a result, many immigrants who come from hierarchical countries have minimal soft skills when they come to Canada, no matter what profession they are in.

Initiative:

The concept of initiative does not exist in hierarchical countries as it does in non-hierarchical countries. In hierarchical countries:

- Superiors give directives to those below them
- Those below do as they are told; nothing more, nothing less
- Questioning authority is not accepted
- Taking initiative is interpreted as defying authority

The **cultural challenge** is that when immigrants from hierarchical countries work in a non-hierarchical country, they often need a lot of guidance and direction because that is what they are accustomed to in their home country. In non-hierarchical countries, the need for too much guidance is often perceived as a lack of initiative.

Notes

Expectations of the school system:

Expectations of the school system vary in different parts of the world. This is one area where you can provide valuable support to IMGs coming to Alberta with school aged children.

In hierarchical countries:

- Role of the teacher is to educate and discipline
- Parents do not play an active role in their child's education
- Emphasis on academics
- Competitive environment (top grades are the key to a successful future)

The emphasis on academics and superior grades breeds a learning environment that is very classroom and instructor based. For example, most university programs in hierarchical countries have a higher lecture component and less laboratory and/or practical components, compared to non-hierarchical countries.

The **cultural difference** is with respect to learning styles. People from hierarchical countries tend to learn by lecture and theory; whereas in Canada, society emphasizes learning through experience.

Notes

Notes: How to support your IMG and their family

Communication

There are vast differences in how people communicate depending on where they are located in the world. We are going to explore some of these communication differences and how they impact our interactions with others. We will also look at some of the things we can do to minimize cultural misunderstandings when interacting with people from different countries.

Cross-Cultural Communication

- Direct and Indirect Communication Styles
- Personal Space
- Emotions
- Challenges with English

Direct and indirect communication styles:

Most countries in the world have either a direct or indirect style of communicating.

A direct communication style is one in which people "tell it like it is" and do not "sugar coat" things. The message is literally the spoken word. There is generally nothing unspoken or left to interpretation.
Example: "The meal at the restaurant was absolutely terrible tonight."

An indirect communication style is one that relies heavily on the words **not** spoken, as well as body language and other implied information.
Example: "The regular chef at the restaurant wasn't working tonight."

In Canada, we tend to mix both communication styles together, which often results in the "sugar coating" behaviour.
Example: "The food is usually very good at this restaurant. Tonight's meal wasn't the best I've ever had, but I would come back again."

The **cultural difference** surfaces when a person delivering a message does not come from the same cultural background as the person receiving the message. As a result, the message received may be very different from the message that was intended.

Notes

Personal space:

People from different parts of the world have a different sense of personal space.

- In countries that have a large population proportionate to land size, people have a smaller sense of personal space
- Coming too close to someone can invade their personal space
- Keeping a large distance between someone can cause feelings of awkwardness

Example: Personal space is greater for those living in Canada than those living in Pakistan. Canada is 9,976,128 square kilometres in size and has a population of just over 33 million, resulting in 3.3 persons per square km. In contrast, Pakistan is only 803,940 square kilometers in size and has a population of 170 million, resulting in 21.1 persons per square km.

The **cultural difference** is that when people have varying comfort zones of personal space, they can be made to feel *uncomfortable* if someone comes too close or remains too far away.

Emotions:

Every country has a range of emotions that is acceptable to show in public. Some cultures are more animated and expressive; others are more reserved.

The **cultural difference** surfaces when a person that is culturally expressive communicates with a person that is culturally unexpressive. Both parties may perceive the interaction differently and walk away with inaccurate assumptions.

Challenges with English:

English speaking countries often use different words and expressions to describe the same thing. For example, a bathroom or washroom is also known as a toilet, a lieu and a restroom. An eraser is also called a rubber.

The **cultural challenge** is that words may have a different meaning in Canada than they do in one's home country. This challenge is one that most people overcome as they spend more time in their new environment.

Notes

Notes: How to support your IMG and their family

Individualism

Individualism refers to the extent to which members of a society identify with a group or groups, compared to an individual entity.

Individualism is another cultural dimension that pervades all aspects of society. The opposite end of this cultural continuum is called collectivism. In this manual we take a look at individualistic and collective differences for the top ten countries of origin that IMGs are coming from. We examine how these differences impact our interactions with others; and what we can do to minimize cultural misunderstandings when interacting with people from different parts of the world.

Individualistic cultures are centred around the 'self'. An individualistic culture is one where the interests of the individual outweigh the interests of any group to which they belong (immediate family is the exception). Collective cultures feel a strong attachment and sense of loyalty to the group(s) to which they belong. The interests of the group outweigh the interests of any one individual.

Individualism

- Family
- Information Sharing
- Decision Making

Family:

In most individualistic cultures, family refers to one's immediate family (namely, parents and children). In most collective cultures, family extends beyond one's immediate family.

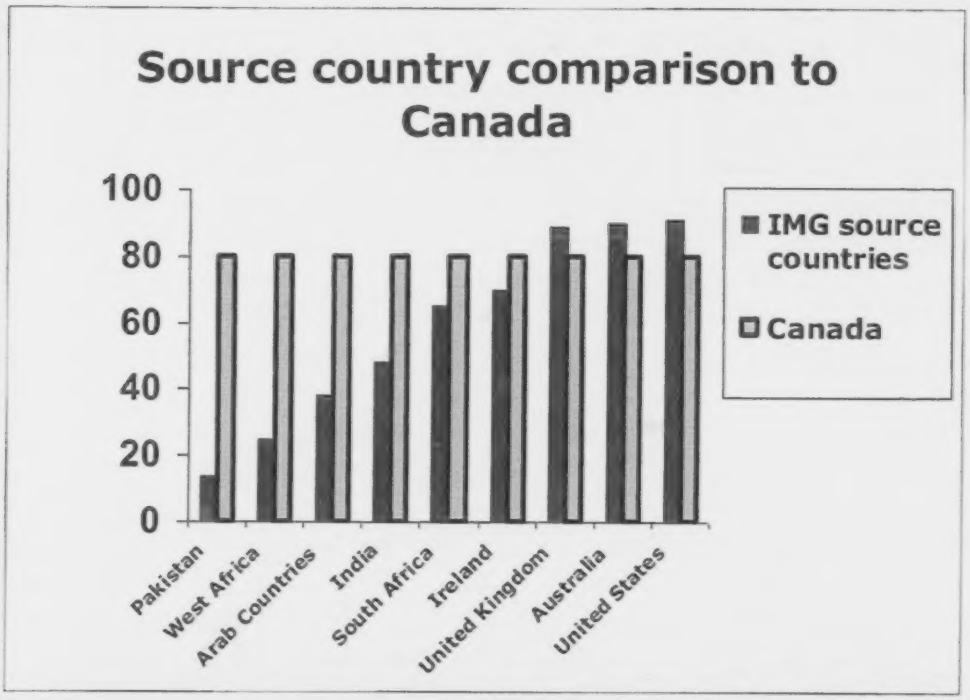
In collective cultures, family can include:

- All relatives, near or far
- Friends
- Neighbourhood/community
- People of the same religion
- Inhabitants of the same country

The **cultural difference** is that what defines 'family' is different in collective and individualistic cultures. This can influence attendance at various events ranging from medical appointments to weddings. For example, weddings in collective cultures typically have hundreds or thousands of guests attend. This is because the group considered 'family' extends farther than it does in a more individualistic country such as Canada.

Notes

Figure 2: Individualism scores for IMG source countries and Canada



Arab countries include **Egypt**, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, **Libya**, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. **Egypt** and **Libya** are two of the top ten countries for IMGs to rural Alberta.

* West African countries include Ghana, **Nigeria** and Sierra Leone. **Nigeria** is one of the top ten source countries for IMGs to rural Alberta.

The higher the score is, the more individualistic the country. The lower the score is, the more collective the country. There is no right or wrong answer on this scale.

Notes

Information sharing:

Individualistic people:

- Generally share information on a need-to-know basis
- Keep information contained to those who need it

Collective people:

- Share information readily, with whomever might have an interest
- The more people involved and in-the-know, the better

For example, collective people in the workplace are more apt to copy others on emails that would not likely be copied if an individualistic person were sending the email. The **cultural difference** is who is considered part of the group or team, and therefore needs to be kept informed on the status of things.

Decision making:

Individualistic people:

- Generally make decisions independently (and are encouraged to do so)
- Make decisions based on how the outcome affects them

Collective people:

- Generally make decisions as a group or reach some form of group consensus
- Make decisions based on how the outcome affects the group
- Often involve numerous people in the decision making process

For example, consider a manager that is taking his or her team of people out for lunch. An individualistic manager may choose the restaurant location beforehand, therefore telling the team where they are going. Conversely, a collective manager may provide several restaurant options to his or her staff and ask each one of them where they want to go. The most popular choice will be where the team will have lunch. The **cultural difference** here is group harmony.

Notes

Notes: How to support your IMG and their family

Conclusion

Overall, it is hoped that the one day workshop that accompanies this manual has been a valuable learning experience and has enabled you to achieve most or all of the stated objectives.

- Have an increased understanding of cultural differences and the impact they can have on IMGs and their families, both in professional life and personal life
- Learn how to adjust their behaviour and communication style so they can minimize misunderstandings and have effective interactions with IMGs and their families, both in and outside of work
- Have the knowledge and tools to enhance the support they provide to IMGs and their families at various phases of their settlement
- Understand when and where they can make a difference and have a positive impact on IMGs and their families
- Feel empowered to build a culturally inclusive community

Final Note:

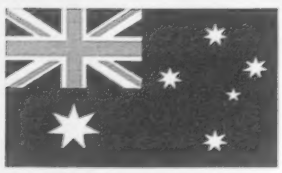
Operating daily life in a different and unknown environment is not something that most of us have experienced. Living in a foreign country – no matter how similar it seems to another country on the surface - is bound to have its challenges, both big and small. Your involvement with your local R&R committee can have a tremendous impact on IMGs and their families.

We thank you for investing your time in this workshop to build your skills and enhance the valuable support that you provide to these newcomers to your community. **YOU** are making a difference in our communities.

Notes

Appendix A
IMG Source Country Information Index

Australia



Location and People

Australia is located in the southern hemisphere between the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific Ocean. Australia does not share borders with any other country and the mainland accounts for much of the Oceania continent. The country is made up of 6 states, 2 territories and has a population of 22 million. The initial population of Australia was made up of Aborigines (Indigenous people) and people of British and Irish descent. After World War II the Australian government worked to attract immigrants in order to boost the population and workforce. As a result there was heavy migration from Europe, especially from Greece, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Yugoslavia, Lebanon and Turkey. In the last 30 years, Australia has liberalized its immigration policy and opened its borders to South East Asia. This has caused a shift in societal perception, with Australians now defining themselves as a multicultural society rather than a homogenous, white, Anglo- Saxon nation.

Language and Religion

Although Australia has no 'official' language, English is the only language spoken in the home for about 80% of the population. Australian English has a number of unique terms, and its grammar and spelling are largely based on that of British English. The next most common languages spoken at home are Chinese (2.1%), Italian (1.9%), and Greek (1.4%).

It is believed that there were between 200 and 300 Australian Aboriginal languages at the time of first European contact, but only 20 are still spoken today. There are also those languages spoken by immigrants that have come from Europe, the Middle East and Asia. A considerable portion of first- and second-generation immigrants are bilingual.

Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in Australia (64%). The second-largest religion is Buddhism (2.1%), followed by Islam (1.7%), Hinduism (0.8%), and Judaism (0.5%). Almost 20% of Australians associate themselves with no religion.

Notes

Industry

Primary industries in the country are mining, industrial and transportation equipment, food processing, chemicals and steel.

Quick Facts:

- Australia is the world's smallest continent and 6th largest country
- Australia is home to the dingo, kangaroo, koala bear, wombat, emu and the kookaburra
- The capital of Australia is Canberra
- The 2 largest cities are Sydney and Melbourne
- Australia has the greatest number of reptiles of any country, with 755 species
- Less than 15% of Australians live in rural areas
- Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world
- Australia has a sign language known as Auslan, which is the main language of about 5,500 deaf people

Standard of Living

The standard of living in Australia is comparatively higher than the rest of the world. It ranks highly in many international comparisons of national performance such as human development, quality of life, health care, life expectancy, public education, economic freedom and the protection of civil liberties and political rights.

- Quality of Life Index (2005): Ranked 6 out of 111 countries
- Australia has one of the most prosperous economies in the world
- There exists a large disparity between the living standards of Aboriginals and the living standards of others

Sport

Sport forms a major part of Australia's culture, especially in terms of watching. Most of Australia's patriotism is expressed through sport, and is thus taken quite seriously. The most popular sports in Australia are cricket, Australian rules football, rugby league, rugby union, horse racing, surfing, football (soccer), and motor racing. Approximately 24% of Australians over the age of 15 regularly participate in organized sporting activities. Other well liked sports include field hockey, netball, rowing and swimming.

Notes

Food

Australia's food traditions have been largely shaped by its inhabitants. For most of Australian history, the cuisine was based on traditional Indigenous bush-food: native berries, fruit, fish, kangaroo and even insects. British food was introduced by the first European settlers, and the 20th century saw an increase in food influenced by Mediterranean and Asian cultures - a reflection of this period's immigrants. Some popular Australian dishes include:

- Sunday roast (a British influenced tradition)
- Kangaroo meat
- Macadamia nuts
- Lamingtons - small squares of plain cake, dipped in melted chocolate and sugar and coated in desiccated coconut
- Pavlova – traditional meringue dessert
- Vegemite - a salty, thick, dark spread used on toast or bread, or flavouring in soups and casseroles
- Sticky date pudding

Greetings

Greetings in Australia typically consist of a handshake and a smile, often accompanied by "G'day" or "G'day, mate".

- Australians are not very formal; greetings are casual and relaxed
- First names are used to address people, even on first meetings

The Family

The nuclear family is most common in Australia, and is typically small. Extended family relatives live in their own homes, often at great distances from their children.

Socializing

- The beach. The beach is an integral part of the Australian identity
- Drinking. The drink of choice has traditionally been beer, but a surge in wine production over recent years has made wine an equally popular beverage
- Elders tend to frequent pubs while youth usually go to a trendy bar or restaurant
- Australians also enjoy home gatherings. Most popular is to entertain friends by hosting an elaborate barbeque
- Australians are known for their hospitality in informal settings

Notes

- Arts and cultural events such as the theatre, museums, concerts and a variety of themed festivals
- Sport is also a common way to socialize with others

Relationships & Communication

Australians are very down to earth and known for their 'laid back' attitude. They are always mindful of not giving the impression that they think they are better than anyone else.

- Australians place a high value on relationships
- They value authenticity and sincerity. They do not like pretentiousness
- Australians do not draw attention to their academic or other achievements
- They often downplay their own success, which may make them appear to not be achievement-oriented
- Australians prefer people who are modest, humble, self-deprecating and have a sense of humour
- Sense of humour is noted for its sarcasm and irony
- There is often an element of humour in their speech, in addition to colourful language that would be unthinkable in other countries
- Australian people are very direct in their communication style

Gift Giving Etiquette

In general, Australians give gifts on birthdays and Christmas. Small gifts are commonly exchanged with family members, close friends and neighbours on these occasions.

- Trades people may be given a small amount of cash, bottle of wine or six-pack of beer as a birthday or Christmas gift
- If you are invited to an Australian's home for dinner, it is polite to bring flowers, good quality chocolates, or a bottle of wine to the host
- Gifts are opened when received

Dining Etiquette

Many invitations to an Australian's home will be for a BBQ – often called a 'barbie'. If you are invited to an Australian's house:

- Arrive on time if invited to dinner; no more than 15 minutes late if you are invited to a barbeque or a large party
- Guests to a barbeque typically bring their own wine or beer to drink. In some cases, very informal barbeques may suggest that you bring your own meat

Notes

- Contact the host ahead of time to see if they would like you to bring a dish
- Wear casual clothes
- Offer to help the host with the preparation or clearing up after a meal is served

Dress

Australia has no official national dress; however, two examples of Australian local dress are bushwear and surfwear.

- The cities of Sydney and Melbourne are known for their fashion sense and chic clothing
- In Brisbane, Perth and other tropical areas, people dress casual (for example, men wear Bermuda shorts to work)

Business Etiquette

- Australians are very matter of fact when it comes to doing business. They tend to get down to business quickly with minimal small talk
- Long-standing relationships do not need to be established before doing business with others
- Australians are quite direct and expect the same in return. They appreciate brevity and are not impressed by too much detail
- Do not like high-pressure techniques
- Known to adopt a win-win negotiating style so that everyone comes away with positive feelings that help facilitate future business dealings
- Decision-making is concentrated at the top of an organization, although decisions are made after consulting with subordinates

Notes

Egypt

Location and People

Egypt is located in North East Africa, sharing borders with Libya, Israel, Sudan and the Mediterranean Sea. Egypt has a population of about 79 million people. It is the most populated country in the Middle East and the third most populous on the continent of Africa. Almost all the population is concentrated along the banks of the Nile (notably Cairo and Alexandria), in the Delta and near the Suez Canal.

Egyptians comprise the majority of the total population at 91%. Bedouins and Berbers make up 8% and the remaining 1% is made up of Nubian, Greek, Armenian and other European nationalities. Egypt also hosts between 500,000 and 3 million refugees from Palestine, Iraq and Sudan.

Language and Religion

Arabic is the official language of Egypt and the main language spoken. Nubian languages are spoken in the Upper Nile valley; other languages spoken in parts of the country include Berber, Domari, Greek and Bedawi.

Approximately 90% of Egypt is Muslim and the remaining 10% is Christian (mostly Coptic Orthodox). Islamic principles and practices govern the personal, political, economic and legal lives of the majority of Egyptians.

Industry

Egypt's economy depends mainly on agriculture, textiles (mainly cotton), media, petroleum exports and tourism. Mining has become more important over the last 20 years with products like crude petroleum, salt, phosphate, iron and manganese being extracted.

Quick Facts:

- Egypt is the world's largest exporter of cotton
- Tea is the national drink in Egypt
- Egyptians were among the very first people to invent writing, along with ink and paper

Notes

- Ancient Egyptians were the first holistic health practitioners. They treated the whole person, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Remedies ranged from herbal and magic medicine to surgery
- The 365 days calendar and the 24-Hour division of the day are Egyptian inventions

Standard of Living

Living standards in Egypt are low by international standards. There exists a clearly defined upper class that controls most of the country's wealth and enjoys an elevated standard of living. There is a growing middle class, and a clearly defined lower/poor class that live in overcrowded housing, have limited food supply and inadequate access to clean water, quality health care or education.

Despite considerable growth in many parts of the Egyptian economy, it is not enough to support the overpopulated country. There is neither sufficient agricultural land, nor water resources to sustain the ever growing population.

- Quality of Life Index (2005): Ranked 80 out of 111 countries
- Extreme differences between the rich and poor
- People are born into a social class (upper, middle, lower) which dictate their everyday lives and the opportunities they will have
- Status is defined more by family background than by absolute wealth
- 20 to 30 percent of the population live below the poverty line
- There is little social mobility
- Egypt is largely dependent on foreign aid and has been criticized by many Human Rights organizations for its violations of human rights

Sport

Football (soccer) is the most popular and national sport of Egypt. Racquet sports such as tennis, squash and handball are also popular.

Food

Egyptian cuisine makes heavy use of legumes and vegetables - these crops are produced in large quantities in the Nile Valley and Delta. Bread is consumed at almost all Egyptian meals; a working-class or rural Egyptian meal might consist of little more than bread and beans. The local bread is a form of pita bread that is used to scoop sauces or dips such as hummus and to wrap kebabs, falafel, etc. in the manner of sandwiches.

Notes

Traditional Egyptian dishes include:

- Kushari – considered to be Egypt's national dish, Kushari is a mixture of rice, lentils, and macaroni
- Ful Medames - cooked and mashed fava beans served with olive oil, chopped parsley, onion, garlic and lemon juice. This dish is often served for breakfast with pita bread
- Rice-stuffed pigeon
- Falafel - fried balls or patties made from ground chickpeas and/or fava beans. Can be eaten by themselves or in a pita as a sandwich
- Baba Ghanoush – roasted and mashed eggplant mixed with diced onions, tomatoes, and other vegetables blended in. In Egypt it is mostly served as a side-dish or salad
- Shawarma - a Middle Eastern sandwich-like wrap of shaved lamb, goat, chicken, turkey, beef, or a mixture. The meat is placed on a spit, and may be grilled for as long as a day. Shawarma is a fast-food staple across the Middle East and North Africa
- Basbousa - a sweet cake made of a semolina soaked in syrup

Greetings

- A traditional greeting is placing the right hand on the person's left shoulder while kissing each cheek – men with men and women with women
- Handshakes are also customary among individuals of the same sex
- Handshakes are given with a smile and direct eye contact
- In any greeting between men and women, the woman must extend her hand first. If she does not, a man should bow his head in greeting
- It is best to follow the lead of the Egyptian you are greeting

The Family

The family is the most important unit in Egyptian society. In Egypt the family consists of both the nuclear family and the extended family.

- Family life is very important to Egyptians
- Marriage is an important part of life. Egyptians are allowed to marry cousins
- The individual is subordinate to the family

Notes

- Nepotism is viewed positively, since it is patronage of one's family

Socializing

Egyptians are very open, social people who generally prefer a relaxed and patient life. Egyptians are expressive and emotional, and are well known for their sense of humour.

- Visiting is a common way of socializing in Egypt
- People visit at one another's homes. They may also meet at bars and open casual restaurants
- Sipping tea in a café is a common pastime for many Egyptians (mainly men)
- Egyptians often identify with community groups, to the point that personal needs are secondary to those of the group
- Kinship plays an important role in all social relations
- Egyptian humour consists of riddles, jokes, sarcasm and wordplays
- Egyptians will often refuse something that is offered at least once before accepting it
- Egypt is known for its many festivals and religious carnivals which are often celebrated by everyone, regardless of creed or religion. The most notable festival/holiday is Ramadan which is celebrated with sounds, lights and the coming together of family and friends

Relationships & Communication

Egyptians consider honour an important facet of interpersonal relationships. An individual's honour is intricately entwined with the reputation and honour of everyone in their family. Honour requires that Egyptians demonstrate hospitality to friends and guests. It also dictates that people dress as well as their financial circumstances allow, and show proper respect and deference to their elders and those in authority.

- A man's word is considered his bond and to go back on your word is to bring dishonour to your family
- Egyptians always offer coffee or tea when they meet someone as a gesture of hospitality. Always accept the beverage, even if you do not take a sip. Declining the offer is viewed as rejecting the person
- For Egyptians, direct eye contact is a sign of honesty and sincerity
- Egyptians are emotive and use hand gestures when they are excited. In general, they speak softly, although they may also shout or pound the table. This is not indicative of anger; it is merely an attempt to demonstrate a point

Notes

- Hierarchy and rank are very important in Egypt. One always shows deference to the most senior person in the group, who will also be the group' spokesperson

Gift Giving Etiquette

Egyptians generally exchange gifts on birthdays and holidays such as Easter and Ramadan.

- If invited to an Egyptian's home for dinner, bring good quality chocolates, sweets or pastries to the host
- Do not give flowers as gifts unless you know that the host will appreciate them. In Egypt flowers are usually reserved for weddings or the ill
- A small gift for children shows affection
- Always give gifts with the right hand or both hands if the gift is heavy
- Gifts are not opened when received

Dining Etiquette

If you are invited to an Egyptian's house:

- Remove your shoes before entering
- Dress well and conservatively. Appearances are important to Egyptians
- Compliment the host on the house
- Wait for the host to tell you where to sit
- Eat with the right hand only. The left hand is considered to be unclean
- It is considered a sincere compliment to take second helpings
- Always show appreciation for the meal
- Salting your food is considered an insult
- Leave a small amount of food on your plate when you have finished eating. Otherwise they will keep filling it up

Dress

Egyptians judge people on appearances, therefore one should wear good quality conservative clothes and present well to others at all times.

- Dress well if you want to make a good impression
- Overall dress is conservative
- Business attire is formal and conservative
- Avoid wearing visible jewellery, especially around the face and neck

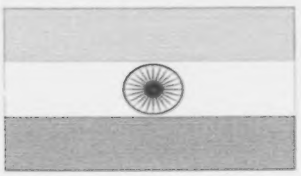
Notes

- Women must be careful to cover themselves appropriately. Skirts and dresses should cover the knee and sleeves should cover most of the arm

Business Etiquette

- Appointments are necessary, should be made in advance, and confirmed one week as well as one day before the meeting
- The social side of business is very important. Egyptians must know and like you to conduct business
- Who you know is more important than what you know, so it is important to network and cultivate a number of contacts
- Business is hierarchical. The highest ranking person makes decisions, but only after obtaining a group consensus
- Decisions are reached after great deliberation
- Business moves at a slow pace as society is extremely bureaucratic. It may take several visits to accomplish a simple task
- Business meetings generally start after prolonged inquiries about health, family, etc.
- Egyptians seldom see an offer as final. They are tough negotiators and do a fair amount of haggling
- Egyptians do not like confrontation and rarely say 'no'. If they do not respond, it usually is a negative sign

Notes



Location and People

India is located in South Asia and is bordered by six countries. It has a population of more than one billion people, making India the country with the second highest population in the world. India is made up of twenty-eight states, seven union territories and has more than two thousand cultural groups. Seventy-two percent of Indians live in rural villages.

Language and Religion

There are several hundred languages spoken in India and different states have different official languages. The official language of the **country** is Hindi, while English is considered to be India's secondary official language.

India is one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world, with some of the most deeply religious societies and cultures. Eighty percent o Indians are Hindu, 13% are Muslim, and Christians and Sikhs each comprise approximately 2%. Other religious groups include Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Baha'i. Religion plays a central and definitive role in the life of most people.

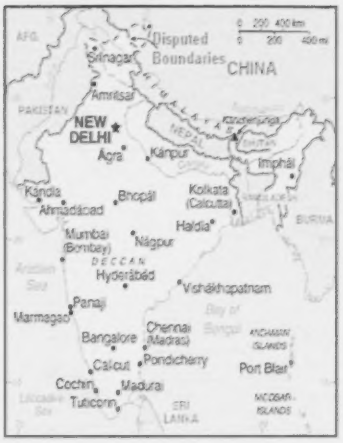
Industry

Major industries in India include telecommunications, textiles, chemicals, food processing, steel, transportation equipment, cement, mining, petroleum, machinery, information technology enabled services and software.

Agriculture is the predominant occupation in India, accounting for about 52% of employment. The service sector makes up a further 34% and industrial sector around 14%.

Notes

Quick Facts:



- The game of chess was invented in India
- India has the third-largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia and Pakistan
- India has the largest number of Post Offices in the world
- Indian Railways is the largest employer in the world, employing over 1 million people
- The studies of Algebra, Trigonometry and Calculus originated in India

Standard of Living

India is a country that is defined by social hierarchy. From an early age, children are reminded of their roles and places in society. Although men and women are equal according to Indian law, they still occupy distinct functions in Indian society. Traditionally, a woman's role in society is to perform household chores and community work. Things are changing and there are more women in India graduating from universities with top degrees than ever before. Yet in the workplace, women are behind men in terms of income and job status.

Indians are always conscious of social order and their status relative to other people, be they family, friends or strangers.

- Quality of Life Index (2005): Ranked 73 out of 111 countries
- Over 41% of people live below the poverty line, earning less than $1.25 per day
- Hierarchy governs social order
- Although Indian law espouses gender equality, there are strong ideas about 'female appropriate behaviour' that exist throughout the country

Caste system: Although once largely governed by the caste system (hierarchy of social class and differential treatment based on social class), India has become more flexible in their views and practices. Caste barriers have mostly broken down in large cities, although they persist in rural areas where the majority of India's population resides. Affirmative action policies have been implemented to afford opportunities to lower caste communities. However, even with this policy, most of the communities that were low in the caste hierarchy remain low in social order today; and communities that were high in the social hierarchy remain high in social order today.

Notes

Sport

Cricket is the national sport of India and is by far the most popular to both play and watch. Other popular sports include field hockey, football (North American soccer), polo and traditional sports called kabaddi and gilli-danda, which are played in most parts of the country.

Food

Indian cuisine varies from region to region. Generally, Indian cuisine can be split into five categories: North, South, East, West and North-east Indian. The multiple families of Indian cuisine are characterized by their use of many spices and herbs.

The most important spices in Indian cuisine are: chilli pepper, black mustard seed, cumin, turmeric, fenugreek, ginger, coriander and garam masala (a powder of five or more dried spices, commonly comprised of cardamom, cinnamon and clove). Curry leaves are typical of South Indian cuisine; and sweet dishes use cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, saffron and rose petal essence.

Indian food staples are rice, lentils and whole wheat flour (used for roti, parathas and other Indian breads). Though a significant portion of Indian food is vegetarian, many traditional Indian dishes also include chicken, goat, lamb, fish and other meats.

Greetings

The customary greeting in India is "Namaste". It is usually accompanied by a slight bow of the head with hands together in prayer position just below the chin. "Namaste" is used across all religions and for all people - young, old, friends and strangers.

- Handshakes are common in the large cities and among the more educated who are accustomed to interacting with westerners
- Men may shake hands with other men and women may shake hands with other women; however there are seldom handshakes between men and women because of religious beliefs
- Hierarchy impacts greetings. The eldest or most senior person should be greeted first
- Titles are important. Indians revere such titles as Professor, Doctor and Engineer. When addressing someone you should always use their professional title with the person's name or surname. If such a title does not apply, use "Sir" or "Madam" followed by the person's surname

Notes

- Wait to be invited before using someone's first name without the title
- Indian names vary depending on religion and location. For example:
  Hindus in the north have a given (first) name and a surname
  Hindus in the south do not normally have a surname
  Many Muslims do not have surnames
  Sikhs all use the name Singh as an adopted surname

The Family

Family plays a big role in Indian culture. India has a long standing tradition of the extended family structure. It is common for extended members of a family like one's parents, children, the children's spouses and their offspring, etc. to live together in one household. The eldest person, usually the male member, is the head of the Indian family and makes all important decisions and rules, which other family members abide by.

- Maintaining harmony and loyalty inside the family is very important. People will behave in a respectable manner at all times and not do anything to cause another person public embarrassment
- Personal interests and feelings are secondary to what is good for the family
- There is a deep-rooted trust among relatives
- Arranged marriages have been the tradition in Indian society for centuries. Even today, the majority of Indians have their marriages planned by their parents and other respected family members, with the consent of the bride and groom

Socializing

Indians typically define themselves by the groups to which they belong rather than by their status as individuals. The groups to which people belong are where the majority of social activity takes place. Three groups that almost all Indians ascribe to are family, religion and the state or region in which they live.

Visiting is the most widely practiced way of socializing in India, and almost always includes food. Food is an important part of Indian culture

Notes

People in India celebrate numerous holidays and festivals. Some are national holidays and festivals, some are local/regional and some are religious. Certain festivals in India are celebrated by multiple religions. Notable examples include Diwali which is celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains; and *Buddh Purnima* which is celebrated by Buddhists and Hindus. Islamic festivals such *Eid ul-Fitr*, *Eid al-Adha* and *Ramadan*, are celebrated by Muslims across India. Regardless of religion, festival time is a time of celebration and socializing in India.

Relationships & Communication

Indians are warm and hospitable people. Initial shyness may be attributed to language barriers more than anything else. Attitude aside, every relationship has a clear-cut hierarchy that must be respected for the social order to be maintained. For example:

The patriarch (usually the father) is the leader of the family
The boss is the source of ultimate responsibility in business
Teachers are called gurus and are viewed as the source of all knowledge

- Hierarchy impacts all relationships. Status is determined by age, university degree and profession
- Relationships between men and women are becoming increasingly informal, especially with the younger generation
- Indians are known to wobble their head from side to side while having a conversation. This head wobble is usually a positive response which has meanings such as "yes", "good" and "I understand"
- Indians are non-confrontational. It is rare for them to openly disagree
- Indians do not like to express 'no,' or give a negative answer, be it verbally or non-verbally. Rather than disappoint someone, Indians will offer the response that they think the other person wants to hear
- This behaviour should not be considered dishonest. An Indian would be considered terribly rude if he or she did not attempt to give a person what had been asked
- Decisions are made by the highest ranking person – however, members of the group are consulted in order to reach consensus

Notes

Gift Giving Etiquette

Indians generally exchange gifts on birthdays and holidays. Different religions may exchange gifts on different occasions.

- If you are invited to an Indian's home for a meal, it is not customary to bring a gift
- Do not give white flowers as a gift as they are used at funerals
- Yellow, green and red are lucky colours. Use these colours for flowers and/or to wrap gifts
- A gift from a man is said to come from both he and his wife (or some other female relative)
- Hindus should not be given gifts made of leather
- Muslims should not be given gifts made of pigskin or alcohol (including perfume)
- Gifts are given with two hands or the right hand
- Gifts are not opened when received

Dining Etiquette

- Most Indian food is eaten with the fingers. If utensils are used, they are generally a spoon and fork
- Food is always eaten with the right hand, regardless of fingers or utensils
- Food is served in a particular order: Guests first, followed by men and children. Women often serve the men and eat later
- Different dietary restrictions may affect the foods that people eat. For example:
  Hindus do not eat beef (many Hindus are vegetarian)
  Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol
  Sikhs do not eat beef
  Lamb, chicken or fish is commonly served as a main course for non-vegetarian meals

If you are invited to an Indian's house for food:

- Arrive on time. Indians may not always be punctual themselves, but they expect foreigners to arrive on time
- Take off your shoes before entering the house
- Dress modestly and conservatively. Many Indians are not comfortable being in the presence of others who expose a lot of skin
- Politely turn down the first offer of tea, coffee or snacks. You will be asked repeatedly. Saying no to the first invitation is part of the protocol
- Wait to be told where to sit

Notes

- You may be asked to wash your hands before and after sitting down to a meal
- In some situations food may be put on your plate; in others you may serve yourself from a communal bowl
- Leaving a small amount of food on your plate indicates that you are satisfied. Finishing all your food means that you are still hungry

Dress

Overall dress is conservative in India. Below is a brief description of the clothes commonly worn by Indian men and women.

Dhoti (men) - A rectangular piece of unstitched cloth, usually around 7 yards long, wrapped around the waist and the legs, and knotted at the waist.

Kurta (men and women) – A loose shirt that falls somewhere around the knees. The kurta can be worn with a variety of pants, including jeans.

Sari (women) – A long sheet of colourful fabric draped over a simple or fancy blouse.

Lehenga choli (women) - A 2 piece outfit comprised of top and high waisted skirt that is made of colourful fabric, often with embroidery.

Bindi (women) - A decoration worn on the forehead. Traditionally, red bindi was worn only by married Hindu women. It has now become a part of women's fashion.

Business Etiquette

- Appointments are made far in advance
- Re-confirm appointments and meetings 1 week in advance as well as the same day. Meetings often get cancelled at the last minute
- Someone's word is sufficient to make an agreement
- Decisions are made by the person with the most authority
- Decision making is a slow process
- Delays are expected
- Meetings often start with a great deal of "getting to know you" talk. In fact, it is quite possible that no business will be discussed at the first meeting
- Always send a detailed agenda in advance. Send back-up materials and charts and other data as well. This allows everyone to review and become comfortable with the material prior to the meeting

Notes

Ireland

Location and People

Ireland is located in Western Europe and is the third largest island on the continent. Ireland is divided into two regions: The Republic of Ireland (which is officially Ireland and covers the majority of the island) and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom. The population of the country is 4.5 million. The majority of Irish people are white and native to Ireland.

Language and Religion

English and Irish (also referred to as Gaelic) are the two official languages of Ireland. However, Irish is only spoken by a small percentage of people.

Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in Ireland. Until the early 1990s, the church had a strong presence in Irish society and politics. As a result, there is somewhat of a generational divide with people over the age of 50 being more observant and maintaining conservative views. The majority of Ireland is Roman Catholic. Other religious groups include various Protestant denominations, a small Jewish community and a Muslim community that is growing as immigration to Ireland increases.

Industry

The major industries of Ireland include food agriculture, brewing, textiles, clothing, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, machinery, transportation equipment, glass and crystal, and software. Industry and services are now more important than agriculture in the economic sector.

Quick Facts:

- Dublin is the capital of the Republic of Ireland
- Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland
- Ireland had the second-highest per capita alcohol consumption in the world (2003)

Notes

Standard of Living

- Quality of Life Index (2005): Ranked first out of 111 countries
- Unemployment rate is generally low, however experienced a significant increase in 2010 due to the global economic recession
- Gender equality between men and women

Sport

Gaelic football is the most popular sport in Ireland both to play and watch. Other popular sports include hurling (a Gaelic sport), soccer and rugby. People also participate in activities such as swimming, golf, cycling, basketball, boxing, cricket, fishing, horse racing, tennis and billiards.

Food

Potatoes are the staple food in Ireland. Common Irish dishes include:

- Breakfast roll - a bread roll containing one or more fillings such as sausage, bacon, white or black pudding, butter and tomato sauce
- Fry-up/Irish breakfast – fried eggs, bacon and black pudding
- Rashers – fatty back bacon
- Irish stew
- Coddle – an Irish dish consisting of layers of sliced pork sausages and rashers with sliced potatoes, and onions. Traditionally, it can also include barley
- Alcohol – Whiskey, Baileys Irish Crème (liquors), Guinness, Porter (beers) and cider

Greetings

The basic greeting is a handshake and a hello or salutation appropriate for the time of day (for example, 'Good Morning').

- Handshake with eye contact
- It is important to smile
- It is customary to shake hands with everyone – men, women and children
- Greetings tend to be warm and friendly and often turn into conversations

Notes

The Family

The extended family is the most common family structure in Ireland. As more people move to urban cities, family remains very important and ties to "home" are still very strong.

Socializing

Ireland is known for its 'pub culture', an important part of Irish society. Typically pubs are important meeting places that offer warm and welcoming hospitality, good conversation and very often traditional Irish music. The term pub refers to the Irish habit of frequenting public houses or bars. Traditional pub culture is about more than drinking. It's a way of separating the day's work and life's stresses by joining with family, friends and neighbours in a relaxed atmosphere.

Visiting and sport are other ways to socialize with others.

Relationships & Communication

The Irish are known for speaking in a graceful and poetic manner. They often use stories and anecdotes to relay information. Similar to Canada, how a person speaks says a lot about them in Ireland.

Also like Canadians, Irish appreciate modesty. For example, when discussing professional achievements, it is best to casually insert the information in small pieces over several conversations as opposed to one long self-centred outline of your successes.

Communication styles vary from direct to indirect, depending on who is being spoken to. There is an overall tendency for people to view politeness as more important than telling the absolute truth. As a result, additional information may be implied beyond what is actually said in a message. For example, if someone becomes silent before agreeing, they have probably said "no".

Generally speaking Irish people do not like confrontation and attempt to avoid it with the use of humour.

The Irish are not very physically demonstrative and are not comfortable with public displays of affection.

Notes

Humour

The Irish have a reputation for their wit and humour, which they call having a 'crack'. They pride themselves on their ability to find humour in almost anything. It is common for people to tease one another and trade insults with those that they are close to. The act of poking fun at someone is often called "slagging". If you are teased, it is important to take it lightly and not see it as personal.

Gift Giving Etiquette

In general, the Irish exchange gifts on birthdays and Christmas.

- A gift does not need to be expensive. It is more important to give something that is thoughtful and personal
- If giving flowers, do not give lilies as they are used at religious festivities. Do not give white flowers as they are used at funerals
- Gifts are usually opened when received

Dining Etiquette

- If invited to an Irish home it is best to be on time. There is a good chance that food has been prepared and being late may spoil it
- Bring a box of good chocolates or a bottle of wine to the host
- Offer to help with clearing the dishes after a meal
- Continental table manners are practiced (hold fork in the left hand and knife in the right while eating)
- Refusing a drink can be perceived as insult in Ireland
- Always buy a round of drinks

Dress

Dress is often modest and conservative. Clothes made out of tweed and wool fabrics are common.

Business Meeting Etiquette

- Irish businesspeople are generally less formal and more outwardly friendly than those from other European countries
- Shake hands at the beginning and end of meetings (Handshakes should be firm and confident)
- The Irish are generally rather casual and address people by their first name

Notes

- Many business people do not have business cards, so you should not be offended if you are not offered one in return
- Meetings are held for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it is to announce information on decisions that have already been made. Other times it is to get feedback and input
- Meetings may be structured or unstructured and in most cases are relaxed. It is customary to have a period of small talk before the actual meeting
- It is quite common to conduct a business meeting in a restaurant or pub. This allows all participants to be on equal footing
- Everyone is expected to participate in meeting discussions. The Irish like to engage in verbal banter and pride themselves on being able to view a problem from every angle

Notes

Libya

Location and People

Libya is located in North Africa between Egypt and Tunisia, bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The population of Libya is approximately 6 million people. The majority of Libyans are Arab or Berber. Berbers are the indigenous peoples of North Africa. Other cultural groups in Libya include Greeks, Maltese, Italians, Egyptians, Pakistanis, Turks, Indians and Tunisians.

Language and Religion

Arabic is the official language of Libya and is the main language spoken. Berber languages are also spoken by many Libyan Berbers, and English and Italian are sometimes spoken in the big cities.

The majority of Libya is Muslim. There are small foreign communities of Christians (mostly Coptic Orthodox).

Industry

Libya relies heavily on the oil sector as its major economic industry. Construction and non-oil manufacturing sectors have expanded from processing mostly agricultural products to include the production of petrochemicals, iron, steel and aluminum.

Quick Facts:

- Most Libyan companies close for prayers on Friday between 11:15am and 3:00pm
- Libya is the fourth largest country (by area) in Africa
- Libya is the only country in the world that has a solid colour for its flag

Notes

Standard of Living

Life in Libya is dominated by Islamic principles and Arab customs.

- Quality of Life Index (2005): Ranked 70 out of 111 countries
- Independent human rights organizations are prohibited. Group minorities suffer discrimination, and the state continues to restrict the labor rights of foreign jobs
- Libyans do not have the right to change their government. Freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion are restricted
- Moderately high unemployment rate
- There are vast differences between men and women. Men and women do not share equal respect and status in all areas of life

Sport

Football is the national sport in Libya.

Food

Libyan cuisine is a mixture of Arabic and Mediterranean, with a strong Italian influence. The Italian influence comes from when Libya was an Italian colony. Common Libyan foods include couscous, bazeen (a type of unsweetened cake), pasta and shurba (a spiced soup). Other traditional Libyan dishes include:

- Batata mubatana (filled potato) – one of the most popular meals in Libyan cuisine, this dish consists of fried potato pieces filled with spiced minced meat, covered with egg and breadcrumbs
- Asida - the nation's traditional dessert. A dish made up of a cooked wheat flour lump of dough, sometimes with added butter or honey
- Libyan tea - a thick beverage served in a small glass, often accompanied by mint or peanuts
- All alcoholic drinks are banned in Libya, in accordance with the laws of Islam

Notes

Greetings

The basic greeting is "Assalamu alaykum" (meaning "peace be with you"), to which one would respond "Wa alaykum assalam" (meaning "and peace be with you as well"). A handshake is often accompanied by a salutation such as "How do you do?" or "Pleased to meet you".

- Greetings are enthusiastic and warm
- Handshakes are common and can be long affairs that extend as long as the verbal niceties take to cover
- Men shake hands. A man must wait for a woman to extend her hand first
- Smiling and direct eye contact is important although the eye contact should be intermittent rather than constant
- Men who know each other well often hug or put their arm around one another
- Conversations often begin with a series of formal questions about health and family
- When asking and answering these questions, people usually clasp each other's hands
- Titles are important. When addressing someone you should always use their academic, political or professional title. If none of these apply, use Mr or Mrs followed by the person's surname. Government officials are usually addressed as "Your Excellency". Do not address someone by their first name unless invited to do so

The Family

The extended family is the norm in Libya, however it is increasingly common for young couples to separate and have a home of their own. Even if this is the case, they often live very close to the rest of the family.

- Maintaining harmony and loyalty inside the family is very important
- People will behave in a respectable manner at all times and not do anything to cause another person public embarrassment
- Personal feelings and needs are often secondary to the good of the group
- Men are the head of the household. They are often the decision makers and the primary wage earners. Women are responsible for maintaining the home

Notes

Socializing

- Visiting is the most widely practiced way of socializing in Libya
- Libyans prefer to eat at home, so inviting people over is common. Folk culture is a big part of social life in Libya. Troupes perform music and dance at frequent festivals, both in Libya and abroad
- Many Libyans frequent the country's beach. This is particularly true on Fridays, when many families go and enjoy a beachside picnic
- The government maintains control over all media outlets. Most television programming is cultural and showcases Libyan music and dance. There are no public theatres and only a few cinemas that show foreign films. As a result, much of the population accesses videos and foreign TV stations via satellite
- Under Islamic law, alcoholic beverages are forbidden. All bars and nightclubs have been closed and provocative entertainment is banned

Relationships & Communication

Libyans consider themselves very much a part of a wider Arab community, and are extremely loyal to this community. The culture in Libya is very relationship oriented and hierarchical. Islam is central to Libyan life. This is easily seen in their social practices.

- There are vast differences between men and women. Women play a secondary role to men in most aspects of life
- Traditionally women remain in the home, and communicate only with family (and others on an as-need basis)
- Most Libyans treasure their privacy
- Do not criticize anyone publicly. It is more important to prevent embarrassment to others than it is to question someone or argue a point
- Libyans are non-confrontational. They may agree with you rather than cause you to lose face
- Relationships are very important, both in personal life and professional life. Libyans want to know a person well before doing business with them. Therefore a lot of time is spent establishing a personal relationship before business is conducted
- Relationships with others take precedence over many aspects of life (with the exception of prayer). You can't rush a relationship, and it would be an insult to try and do so. Relationships with one's family and the Arab community come before all else (with the exception of prayer)
- Normal for a hierarchical country, who you know is more important than what you know. It is therefore important to

Notes

cultivate a number of relationships so that contacts are in place when you need assistance
- Men are the head of the household and make most family decisions. In a group of people or an organization, decisions are made by the highest ranking person – however members of the group are consulted in order to reach consensus

Gift Giving Etiquette

Libyans generally exchange gifts on birthdays and Eid-ul-Fitr. This is the celebration that follows the end of Ramadan, one of the holiest times of the year for Muslims.

- If you are invited to a Libyan's home, bring something sweet such as pastries, fruit or a small gift from your home country
- If a man must give a gift to a woman, he should say that it is from his wife, mother, sister, or some other female relation
- A small gift for the children is always a nice touch
- Gifts are given with two hands or the right hand
- Gifts are generally not opened when received
- Do not give any gift containing alcohol. This includes liquor or perfume. Alcohol is forbidden in Islam

Dining Etiquette

- It is increasingly common in large urban areas for men and women to eat together, although in some families men and women will eat in separate rooms or one after the other
- A bowl of perfumed water may be passed around the table before the meal. Each person dips three fingers into the water as a form of ritual cleansing
- A short prayer may be said before and after the meal
- Honoured guests are generally asked to serve themselves first or the host may serve them
- People eat with their fingers and use only the right hand (the left hand is considered unclean)
- Meals are prepared by women of the house and served to guests by young men of the house
- Food is often served on long low tables. People sit cross legged to eat

If you are invited to a Libyan's house for food then:

- Try to be on time, although being 15 to 20 minutes late would not be seen as rude
- Dress conservatively
- Check if you should remove your shoes at the door
- Show respect for the elders by greeting them first

Notes

- Accept any offer of coffee or tea
- Expect there to be more food than can be consumed by the number of guests present
- You will be urged to take more food even after you have said you are full
- Always leave a small bit of food on your plate when you have finished to show that your host has showered you with generosity and abundance

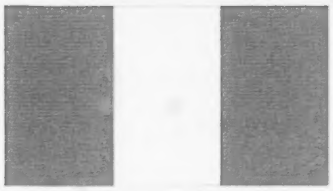
Dress

- Overall dress is conservative
- Purdah is the custom of covering and veiling women. This is a traditional feature of Libyan culture
- Traditional attire for men is a long, white gown worn over a shirt and pants. Some men wear a black or white Muslim hat on their heads
- Traditional attire for women consists of long gowns and hair coverings. Most women's gowns cover both the head and body
- Young men and women wear modern clothing, but most women continue to cover their hair in keeping with Islamic tradition

Business Etiquette

- Appointments are necessary and should be made as far in advance as possible and confirmed a day or two before the meeting
- It is best to avoid scheduling meetings during Ramadan since Muslims cannot eat or drink during the day
- In general, Libyans have an open-door policy, even during meetings. This means you may experience frequent interruptions. Others may even wander into the room and start a different discussion. You may join in, but do not try to bring the topic back to the original discussion until the new person leaves
- Companies are hierarchical. The highest ranking person makes decisions, but only after obtaining a group consensus
- Decisions are reached after great deliberation
- Expect a fair amount of haggling. Libyans seldom see an offer as final
- Decisions are made slowly. Do not try to rush the process, as it would be interpreted as an insult
- It may take several visits to accomplish simple tasks
- Libyans can be deliberate and forceful negotiators

Notes



Location and People

Nigeria is located in West Africa and shares borders with Benin, Chad, Cameroon, Niger and the Gulf of Guinea. The country is divided into 36 states and 1 Federal Capital Territory. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the most populous country in the world in which the majority of the population are black. Nigeria's population is estimated around 154 million - approximately half of the people live in rural areas and half live in urban areas.

Nigeria has more than 250 cultural groups with varying languages and customs. The largest and most influential of these groups are the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, accounting for 68% of the population. The rest of Nigeria's cultural groups (sometimes called "mini-minorities") are found all over the country, especially in the south.

Language and Religion

There are an estimated 521 languages recorded in Nigeria. This number includes 510 living languages, two second languages without native speakers and nine extinct languages. English is Nigeria's official language; however, it is rarely spoken as a first language. English is widely used for education, business transactions and for official purposes. Generally speaking, most cultural groups prefer to communicate in their own languages.

Nigeria is home to a variety of religions which tend to vary regionally. The largest religions of Nigeria are Islam and Christianity which are evenly split in terms of practice. A very small minority of the population practices indigenous religions.

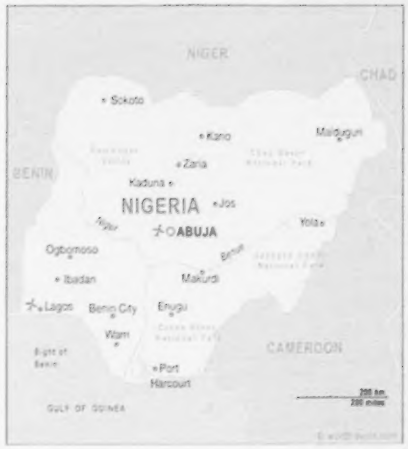
Industry

Nigeria has the third largest economy in Africa, and petroleum plays a large role. Nigeria is the 12th largest producer of petroleum in the world and the 8th largest exporter. Other profitable industries include telecommunications, financial services, agriculture, natural resources and manufacturing (automotive, textiles, plastics, etc.).

Notes

Quick Facts:

- Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the 8th most populous country in the world
- Nigeria has 6 cities with a population over 1 million people
- It is thought that Nigeria will be one of the countries accounting for most of the world's total population increase by 2050
- One out of every four Africans is Nigerian
- Nigeria has one of the fastest growing economies in the world



Standard of Living

- Quality of Life Index (2005): Ranked 108 out of 111 countries
- Health, health care, and general living conditions in Nigeria are poor
- Just over half the population has access to clean drinking water and appropriate sanitation
- Average life expectancy is 47 years of age for both men and women
- Attendance rate for secondary education is only 29%
- Corruption is frequent among government officials and there are many abuses of human rights
- Nigeria is home to a substantial network of organized crime such as drug trafficking and gang violence

Sport

Soccer is Nigeria's national sport, as well as being the most popular. Nigerians are also involved in other sports such as basketball, boxing, cricket, and track and field.

Food

Food is an important part of Nigerian life. Seafood, beef, poultry, and goat are the primary sources of protein. With so many different cultures and regions, food can vary greatly. In the southern areas a variety of soups containing a base of tomatoes, onions, red pepper, and palm oil are prepared with vegetables such as okra and meat or fish. Rice, yams and beans are eaten throughout the country, and in the north grains such as millet and wheat make up a large part of the diet. Many dishes are flavoured with onions, palm oil and chillies. Other Nigerian dishes include:

Notes

- Cassava - a firm rich vegetable with a shiny white skin and creamy white flesh
- Gari – a flour made of cassava, used as a base in many foods
- Ukwaka – a steamed pudding made from corn and ripe plantains
- Moin-moin – a steamed cake of ground dried beans and fish
- Jollof – a spicy tomato based rice

Greetings

The most common greeting is a handshake with a warm, welcoming smile.

- Men may place their left hand on the other person's shoulder while shaking hands. Smiling and showing sincere pleasure is important
- It is rude to rush the greeting process (this applies to all of Africa)
- One must take the time to ask about the person's health, the health of their family, or other social niceties
- Close friends and family members often kiss and hug when meeting
- A Nigerian generally waits for the woman to extend her hand
- Observant Muslims will not generally shake hands with members of the opposite sex
- Address people initially by their academic, professional or honorific title and their surname
- Friends may address each other in a variety of ways: the title and the first name, the first name alone, the surname alone, or a nickname
- Always wait to be invited before using someone's first name
- When greeting someone who is obviously much older, it is a sign of respect and deference to bow the head

The Family

Extended families are the norm in Nigeria and the backbone of the social system. Grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers and in-laws all work as one unit throughout life.

Family relationships are guided by hierarchy and seniority. Social standing and recognition is achieved through extended families. Similarly a family's honour is influenced by the actions of its members. Individuals turn to members of the extended family for financial aid and guidance, and the family is expected to provide for the welfare of every member.

Notes

Although the role of the extended family is diminishing somewhat in urban areas, there remains a strong tradition of mutual caring and responsibility among the members.

Socializing

- The family is the central institution. Families gather to celebrate births, weddings, funerals and several holidays throughout the year
- Hotels and nightclubs are common, especially in the larger cities
- Establishments serving alcoholic beverages are found throughout the country, except where Islamic laws prohibit them
- Movie theatres are popular among the urban middle- and low-income populations
- Home entertainment such as radio, television, recorded music and movies have grown in popularity; however their use is dependent on the availability of electricity

Relationships & Communication

Communication styles vary by region due to the many cultural groups that make up Nigeria. For example, in the southwest part of the country where the people are from the Yoruba tribe, people communicate using proverbs, sayings and even songs to enrich the meaning of what they say. Nigerians living in the south of the country tend to speak more directly and use a slightly louder tone of voice than that used elsewhere. People may raise their voices even more and become emotionally excited when they feel passionately about a topic. At the same time, a harsh tone is considered unwelcoming and even hostile.

Generally speaking:

- Nigerians prefer facial expressions that imply empathy. They believe an indifferent facial expression indicates that someone is ignorant or obnoxious
- Nigerians are outgoing and friendly. Communication begins with polite inquiries into the welfare of the person and his or her family. Such social niceties go a long way
- Nigerian communication can be indirect and rely on non-verbal cues. Many people use gestures when communicating. They may smile to mask their true feelings, especially when disappointed or confused
- Many Nigerians employ indirect eye contact to show their respect for the other person. It is common to gaze at the forehead or shoulders of a person they do not know well

Notes

- Direct eye contact may be interpreted as intrusive unless there is a longstanding personal relationship
- Nigerian communication can also be extremely direct; there is no difficulty stating what is on one's mind. It is therefore a good idea to observe the situation carefully before determining what behaviour is appropriate
- Nigerians start with the general idea and slowly move to the specific, often using a somewhat roundabout route
- Nigerians tend to look for the rationale behind behaviour and attempt to understand the context. They tend to examine behaviour in its total context, not merely what they have observed

Gift Giving Etiquette

- Gifts should be given using the right hand only or both hands. Never use the left hand only
- At Ramadan, it is customary for Muslims to give gifts of food and fruit
- Gifts from a man to a woman must be said to come from the man's mother, wife, sister, or other female relative; never from the man himself
- Gifts should be wrapped. Any colour of wrapping paper is fine
- Gifts are not always opened when received

Dining Etiquette

If you are invited to a Nigerian's house for dinner:

- Bring fruit, nuts or chocolates for the host
- A gift for the children is always a nice touch
- It is important to compliment the food that has been provided
- Traditionally, Nigerians eat with their hands. They do not use their left hand as the left hand is considered unclean
- People are not supposed to say "thank you" when they are offered food. This is part of Nigerian hospitality

Dress

Nigerian clothing is based on Nigerian culture and reflects the many cultural groups. Each group has its own traditional dress code. In the north, people prefer their dress to be based on their work. In the south, people are fond of dressing up. One thing all Nigerians have in common regarding clothes is that their style of dress is conservative. Below is a brief description of the clothes commonly worn by Nigerian men and women.

Notes

Buba (men and women) - A loose blouse that goes a little below the waist for women. A loose shirt that goes halfway down the knees for men

Kaba (women) – A single piece dress which can have different styles

Iro (women) – The bottom part of clothing, which is a rectangular piece of cloth that is wrapped around the waist

Gele (women) - A decoration for the head; a rectangular piece of cloth that be tied in different ways to give different looks

Ipele (women) - A scarf that is either tied around the neck or placed diagonally across the body

Sokoto (men) – The pant or trouser, which covers the lower part of the body

Abeti-aja (men) - A type of cap that has long sides; another common type of cap is called a Fila

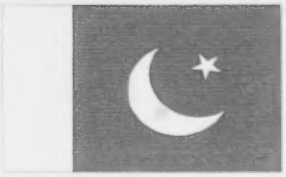
Agbada (men) – A festive clothing that is made by pairing the buba and sokoto

Business Etiquette

- Nigerians prefer to develop personal relationships prior to conducting business
- Team members should present a united front at meetings. Any disagreement between members will be interpreted as not telling the entire story
- Nigerians will generally follow the agenda point by point and may want to consult with key stakeholders who will not be present prior to the meeting
- Present and receive business cards with two hands or the right hand, never with the left
- Include any advanced university degree on business cards and make certain that one's title is prominently displayed
- Nigerians never write on their business cards. If the information has changed, new cards are printed

Notes

Pakistan



Location and People

Pakistan is located in South Asia where it is bordered by Afghanistan, China, India, Iran and the Arabian Sea. The population is estimated to be around 170 million, making Pakistan the world's 6th most populous country. Pakistan is made up of several cultural groups, including Punjabis, Kashmiri and Sindhis in the east; tribal cultures of the Baloch and Pashtun in the west; and ancient Dardic and Tajik communities in the north.

Language and Religion

Pakistan is a multilingual country with more than 60 spoken languages. English is the official language of Pakistan and is used in official business, government and legal contracts. Urdu is the country's national language. Other languages include Punjabi, Siraiki, Sindhi, Pashtu, Balochi, Hindko, Brahui, Burushaski, Balti, Khawar and Gujrati. Still others exist but with much smaller numbers of speakers.

About 95% of Pakistan is Muslim. The remaining 5% is made up of Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, Buddhists, Baha'is and Ahmadis.

Industry

Cotton textile production and clothing manufacturing are Pakistan's largest industries. They account for close to 66% of merchandise exports and almost 40% of the employed labour force. Other major industries include cement, fertilizer, edible oil, sugar, steel, tobacco, chemicals, machinery and food processing.

Quick Facts:

- The capital of Pakistan is Islamabad
- Pakistan has the second-largest Muslim population in the world, outnumbered only by Indonesia
- Pakistan is the 6th most populous country in the world
- Under British rule, Pakistan was part of India. It separated and became its own country in 1947
- Friday is the Muslim holy day. Everything is closed on Fridays

Notes

Standard of Living

Pakistan is a country defined by Islamic practices and social hierarchy which govern all aspects of life. The country faces major water shortages, air pollution, crime, terrorism and traffic jams.

Quality of Life Index (2005): Ranked 93 out of 111 countries

- About 20% of people live below the international poverty line, earning less than US$1.25 per day
- Hierarchy governs social order
- Corruption is a common occurrence

Sport

Field hockey is the national sport of Pakistan; however, cricket is the most popular game throughout the country. Squash is also a popular sport and the country has produced several world-class squash players.

Food

Pakistani food is a mixture of Middle Eastern, Iranian, Afghan, Indian and Turkish cuisine that reflects the country's history as well as the variation of cooking practices from across the surrounding regions. Meat plays a large role in Pakistani food, particularly beef, goat, lamb and chicken. Seafood is generally not consumed in large amounts, though it is very popular in the coastal areas of the country.

Curry is a regular part of the Pakistani diet, cooked and consumed several days per week. Curries are made with or without meat and are combined with local vegetables such as bitter gourd, cauliflower, eggplant, okra, cabbage, potatoes, rutabaga, saag and peppers. Bread, lentils and/or rice also accompany each meal.

Greetings

- Greetings are often between members of the same sex. It is not appropriate for a man to shake hands with a woman or touch her in public. A man may greet another man's wife verbally, without looking directly at her
- Men shake hands with each other. Once a relationship is developed, they may also hug one another in greeting
- Women generally hug and kiss when greeting
- Verbal greetings include somewhat lengthy inquiries about one's health and family

Notes

- Titles or last names are used when addressing people. It is recommended not to call someone by their first name unless invited to do so
- Pakistani names often denote a person's class, tribe, occupation or other status indicator

The Family

Family plays a big role in Pakistani culture.The extended family is the basis of both the social structure and individual identity. It includes the nuclear family, immediate relatives, distant relatives, tribe members, friends and neighbours.

- Loyalty to the family comes before other social relationships, even business
- The family is more private than in many other cultures
- Nepotism is viewed positively since it guarantees hiring people who can be trusted, especially in a country where working with people one knows and trusts is of primary importance
- Female relatives are protected from outside influences. It is considered inappropriate to ask questions about a Pakistani's wife or other female relatives
- Families are quite large by western standards, often having up to 6 children

Socializing

- Visiting is the most widely practiced way of socializing in Pakistan, and almost always includes food. Pakistani people are very warm and hospitable to their guests. In many traditional cultures of Pakistan, hospitality is considered an obligation, and anyone found to be a poor host is shunned socially
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages by Muslims is officially illegal in Pakistan
- Shopping is a popular pastime for many Pakistanis, especially among the well-to-do and the 30 million people who make up the middle class. Several cities are known for their shopping experiences – everything from bustling bazaars to colourful, modern multi-story shopping malls
- There are numerous holidays and festivals celebrated in Pakistan. These are the ultimate times of celebration and socializing with family and friends. For example:

Ramadan - the holiest month of the Islamic calendar in which people fast from sunrise to sunset. Special foods are cooked in great quantities, parties are held, and special accommodation is made by workplaces and educational institutes.

Notes

Chand Raat – marks the end of Ramadan and occurs the night before Eid day celebrations begin. People celebrate in a variety of ways. Girls put henna on their hands, and people buy gifts and sweets to give to friends and families who come over to celebrate the end of Ramadan. The streets are filled with elaborate decorations and colourful light shows.

Eid ul-Fitr – celebrates the end of the month of fasting. The day is spent visiting relatives and friends, and sharing gifts and sweets with everyone. During the evening people go to the town for more celebrating, to eat in restaurants or to relax in urban parks. It is also common for people to give money to charity.

Relationships & Communication

Pakistan is a hierarchical and relationship driven society. People are respected because of their age and position. Older people are viewed as wise and are granted respect. In a social situation, they are introduced first and served first, and are provided with the finest food. In general, they are treated much like royalty.

- Titles are very important and denote respect. One should use a person's title and their surname until invited to use one's first name
- Pakistanis are generally indirect communicators and maintain indirect eye contact while speaking
- They tend to speak in a vague and roundabout fashion, particularly when saying 'no'
- Direct statements are only made to those with whom they have a long-standing personal relationship
- Pakistanis prefer to converse in a non-controversial manner. They may say that they "will try" rather than admit that they cannot or will not be able to do something
- Hyperboles and similes are frequently used in conversation
- Pakistanis stand close to one another while conversing. They do not require as much personal space as most western cultures
- Personal questions are often asked as a way to get to know you as a person
- Silence is often used as a communication tool
- Hierarchy is involved in all relationships. Deference is always shown to the most senior person in the group
- Pakistanis expect the most senior person - either by age or position - to make decisions that are in the best interest of the group
- People in Pakistan go out of their way to praise and flatter others

Notes

Gift Giving Etiquette

Pakistanis generally exchange gifts on birthdays and holidays. Different religions may exchange gifts on different occasions.

- If invited to a Pakistani home, bring the host a small gift such as flowers or good quality chocolates
- Men should avoid giving flowers to women
- When giving flowers, do not give white flowers as they are used at weddings
- A gift from a man is said to come from both he and his wife (or some other female relative)
- Do not give alcohol
- Gifts are given with two hands or the right hand
- Gifts are not opened when received

Dining Etiquette

If you are invited to a Pakistani's house for food:

- Arrive approximately 15 minutes later than the stipulated time when invited to dinner or a small gathering. One may arrive up to one hour later than the stipulated time when invited to a party
- Remove your shoes at the door
- Dress conservatively. Many Pakistanis are not comfortable being in the presence of others who expose a lot of skin
- Show respect for the elders by greeting them first
- In more rural areas, it is common to eat meals from a knee-high round table while sitting on the floor
- Many people in urban and rural areas to do not use utensils, although more westernized families do
- Guests are served first, followed by the oldest and continuing in the order of age until the youngest is served
- Do not start eating until the oldest person at the table begins
- One will be urged to take second and even third helpings. Saying "I'm full" will be taken as a polite gesture and not accepted at face value
- Eat only with the right hand. The left hand is considered unclean

Dress

The national dress for both men and women in Pakistan is the Shalwar Kameez. The shalwar kameez is made up of a long, loose fitting tunic with very baggy trousers. The men's version consists of solid, masculine colours, and is almost always accompanied by a collar and buttons. Men often wear an outer waistcoat over the shalwar kameez.

Notes

The women's version consists of feminine colors and may feature lace or flower patterns as well as embroidery.

Business Etiquette

- Pakistanis prefer to work with people they know and trust, and will spend a great deal of time on relationship building
- During the first several meetings, business may not be discussed at all as the relationship is still being developed
- Pakistanis prefer to do business in person. They see the telephone as too impersonal
- Appointments are necessary and should be made in writing, three to four weeks in advance. Meetings with private companies can often be arranged with less notice
- One should arrive to meetings on time but be prepared to wait. Pakistanis who are accustomed to working with international companies often strive for punctuality, but are not always successful
- It is not uncommon to have a meeting cancelled at the last minute or even once you have arrived
- In general, Pakistanis have an open-door policy, even when they are in a meeting. This means there may be frequent interruptions, including other people wandering into the room and starting a different discussion
- Business meetings start after prolonged inquiries about health, family, etc. However, never inquire specifically about someone's wife or daughters
- Companies are hierarchical and decisions are made by the highest-ranking person. Decisions are reached slowly. If one tries to rush things, offense will be taken and the business relationship can potentially be jeopardized

Notes

South Africa

Location and People

South Africa is located at the southern tip of the African continent and is bordered by 6 countries. It has a population of approximately 49 million and is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world: 77% of South Africans are Black, 10% are White, 8% are Coloured (mixed) and 2.5% are Indian or Asian descent. Immigration has brought people from Europe, China, Indonesia and Malaysia, among other countries.

The Black population is divided into four major cultural groups: Nguni, Sotho, Shangaan-Tsonga and Venda. These groups are further divided into many subgroups. The majority of the White population is either of British descent or Afrikaans descent (Dutch ancestry).

The effects of South Africa's system of apartheid are still felt by many. As a result, racial discrimination can still be found in South Africa. Apartheid was a system of legal racial segregation enforced by the South African government between 1948 and 1994. There was minority rule by White South Africans who allocated greater privileges and freedoms to white people and lesser privileges and freedoms to the majority non-white people. The apartheid legislation classified inhabitants into racial groups ("black", "white", "coloured", and "Indian"). The government segregated housing, education, medical care, and other public services, with services for black people being inferior to those of white people. Black people were even deprived of their citizenship.

Apartheid officially ended in 1994. This same year Nelson Mandela became president of South Africa as a result of the country's first fully representative election. Although race relations in South Africa have improved over the past several years, there is no question that the remnants of apartheid still shape South African politics and society. The majority of South Africans today support integration, yet there are many schools and churches that remain segregated. One thing that seems to unite all South Africans is their shared claim to the country as their home. Generally speaking, South Africans strive for a better future for their country.

Notes

Language and Religion

There are eleven official languages in South Africa: English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, Sepedi, Xhosa, Venda, Tswana, Southern Sotho, Zulu, Swazi and Tsonga. The majority of South Africans speak English or Afrikaans, and many may speak an additional native language.

Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in South Africa; however other religions (for example Islam, Hinduism, Judaism) are practiced and respected.

Industry

Primary industries in the country are mining, oil and gas. Other industries include manufacturing, construction and building materials, forestry and paper, and steel and other metals.

Quick Facts:

- The capital of South Africa is Pretoria
- The 2 largest (and well known) cities are Johannesburg and Capetown
- 20% of the world's gold is mined in South Africa
- South Africa is often called the Rainbow Nation because of its many cultures

Standard of Living

- Quality of Life Index (2005): Ranked 92 out of 111 countries
- High unemployment rate
- Majority of whites are wealthy by South African standards. Most families have hired help to assist with house work and child care
- Majority of blacks are poor
- Coloured people, Indians and a growing number of Blacks are middle class and live in gated communities
- Men and women do not generally share the same level of equality in the work force
- Crime rate is high, largely due to the disproportionate poverty in the country

Notes

Sport

Like Canadians, South Africans are very enthusiastic about sports. The most popular sports in South Africa are soccer, rugby and cricket. Other well liked sports include surfing, boxing, football, golf, swimming and tennis.

Food

Many South Africans enjoy a diet rich in meat. Potatoes and rice are staples at the dinner table, and braai (barbecue) is very popular, especially among White South Africans. Porridge (maize) is a food staple for black South Africans, and melktert (milk tart) is a popular dessert among all. Indian curry and Portuguese chicken are also popular.

Greetings

There are several greeting styles in South Africa depending upon the cultural heritage of the person you are meeting.

- Most South Africans shake hands, maintain eye contact and smile. This is generally accompanied by exchanging pleasantries and social discussion
- Some women do not shake hands and merely nod their head. It is best to wait for a woman to extend her hand
- Men may kiss a woman they know well on the cheek in place of a handshake
- Greetings are leisurely and include time for social discussion and exchanging pleasantries

The Family

There are different kinds of family structures in South African culture. English speaking White South Africans are similar to Canadians in placing the greatest importance on the nuclear family. For many Coloured South Africans and traditional Afrikaans cultures, extended family is just as important as the nuclear family.

For many Black South Africans, family extends all the way to the tribe which is the most important community of all. The tribe provides both emotional and financial security in much the same way the nuclear family does to White or Coloured South Africans.

Notes

Socializing

- Visiting is very important, regardless of cultural descent. Visits are usually arranged in advance; however unannounced visits are acceptable among close friends or relatives
- South Africans tend to be gracious hosts and usually serve refreshments to their guests
- If you are invited to a South African's house for dinner, arrive on time and ask ahead of time if you should bring a dish
- Sport is also a common way to socialize with others

Relationships & Communication

South Africans tend to be very direct in their communication style. They speak openly about race and tend to be less politically correct than Canadians are accustomed to. It is acceptable to talk about racial matters and ask questions, but imposing your views is not recommended.

- South Africans are often sarcastic in their humour and like to use metaphors and sports analogies to demonstrate a point
- People generally respect others in positions of seniority
- Many South Africans, regardless of group, prefer face to face communication over other modes of communication such as email or telephone
- South Africans are generally physically expressive when talking – a lot of hand movements, back slapping and animated tones of voice

Gift Giving Etiquette

In general, South Africans give gifts on birthdays and Christmas

- Two birthdays – ages 21 and 40 - are often celebrated with a large party in which a lavish gift is given. It is common for several friends to contribute to this gift to help lower the cost
- If you are invited to a South African's home, bring flowers, good quality chocolates, or a bottle of good South African wine to the host
- Wrapping a gift nicely shows extra effort
- Gifts are opened when received

Notes

Dining Etiquette

If you are invited to a South African's house:

- Arrive on time if invited to dinner
- Contact the host ahead of time to see if they would like you to bring a dish
- Wear casual clothes. This may include jeans or pressed shorts. It is a good idea to check with the host in advance
- Offer to help the host with the preparation or clearing up after a meal is served

Dress

Most South Africans wear western style clothing and dress casual. Men may wear shorts with socks to the knee and women generally wear pants or dresses. In rural towns and villages some people retain their traditional clothing.

Business Etiquette

- Appointments are necessary and should be made in advance
- Deadlines are often viewed as fluid rather than firm commitments
- Start negotiating with a realistic figure. South Africans do not like to haggle over price
- Decision-making is usually concentrated at the top of an organization
- Decisions are often made after consulting with subordinates

Notes

Location and People

The United Kingdom (UK) is an island country located in Western Europe. Its proper name is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The UK is comprised of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales (together these 3 form Great Britain) and Northern Ireland. While there is certainly some overlap and commonalities among these four countries, there is a strong sense of identity and nationalism felt by the populations of each. People from Scotland generally identify as Scottish and inhabitants of Wales generally identify as Welsh. The term 'English' applies only to those that are from England. People from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland often take offense to being called English.

The population of the UK is over 60 million, with the country of England accounting for the majority of people (over 50 million). The majority of people in the UK are white (English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish). The UK is becoming increasingly diverse as immigration from African and South Asian countries is on the rise. As of 2006, the largest numbers of immigrants were from India, Pakistan, Somalia and the Philippines.

Language and Religion

English is the official language of the UK. Other native languages include Welsh, Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Cornish. Immigrants have naturally brought many foreign languages with them from across the globe.

Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in the UK. Other religious groups include (but are not exclusive to) Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Buddhist.

Industry

The major industries of the UK are manufacturing (namely automobiles and aircrafts), financial services and pharmaceuticals.

Notes

Quick Facts:

- London is the capital city of both England and the United Kingdom as a whole
- Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland; Cardiff is the capital of Wales; Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland
- England accounts for just over half of the total area of the UK
- UK has the sixth largest economy in the world
- UK has the largest concentration of foreign bank branches in the world
- Curry is currently the most popular dish in England
- The game of tennis originated in England between 1859 and 1865. Wimbledon - the international tennis championships – is held in London every year

Standard of Living

- Quality of Life Index (2005): Ranked 29 out of 111 countries
- Low corruption
- Equal respect and status between men and women in all areas of life

Class System: Traditionally, Britain's social structure was organized according to a Class system, with the British Royal Family at the top. Factors known to impact social class in the UK include occupation, where one lives and caste (family lineage). Although wealth distribution has changed in recent years and the field is levelling, many British people still pigeon-hole others according to class: upper class, upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class, working class and underclass, are some examples. Currently in the UK, class is as much about things like accent, vocabulary, manners and style of dress, as it is about money or where one lives.

Remnants of the class system can be found in the UK's school system. The UK has many prominent private schools that have a reputation superior to state schools. Most primary and secondary schools in both the private and state sectors have compulsory school uniforms.

Notes

Sport

Football is the most popular sport in the UK. Other major sports include rugby union, rugby league, boxing, badminton, cricket, tennis, golf and snooker. Motor racing is also very popular – many Formula One (F1) teams are based out of the UK.

Food

British food has traditionally been based on meat and potatoes. The typical foods eaten in Britain include fish and chips, roast dinners and Yorkshire pudding.

Here are some dishes native to the UK:

- Black pudding - eaten at breakfast time, this pudding looks like a black sausage. It is made from dried pigs blood and fat
- Bangers and mash – sausages and mashed potatoes
- English breakfast – eggs, bacon, sausages, fried bread, mushrooms and baked beans
- Shepherds' pie – minced lamb and vegetables topped with mashed potato
- Cottage pie – minced beef and vegetables topped with mashed potato

Greetings

The basic greeting is a firm handshake often accompanied by a salutation such as "How do you do?" or "Pleased to meet you".

- Eye contact is maintained during the greeting but not prolonged
- Most people use titles such as Mr or Mrs followed by their surname (last name)
- Wait to be invited to use a person's first name
- Putting one's arm around the shoulder of another typically only happens when people know each other very well

Notes

The Family

Family dynamics are changing in the UK as divorce is becoming more socially acceptable. The nuclear family used to be most common, but there are now a growing number of single person households. Many couples live together and have children without getting married - 40% of children in the UK are born to unmarried parents (who live together). People tend to get married at a later age than the previous generation, and many women choose to concentrate on their careers and delay having a baby until their late thirties.

Although extended family members do not live in the same household, relations with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins are still somewhat close.

Socializing

- Going to the pub is the most popular leisure activity in the UK. Pubs are an important part of British life – they are where people meet to talk, eat, drink and relax
- The second most popular activity is visiting or entertaining friends or family
- Other means of socializing include: sports and physical recreation, shopping (usually an activity enjoyed by women), going to the cinema and eating out
- Punctuality is important in British society. It is important to be on time for appointments, personal or professional

Relationships & Communication

The British are generally reserved and private people. Privacy is extremely important and they expect others to respect their privacy. This extends to not asking personal questions. Even among close friends, it is uncommon to ask personal questions, especially about one's financial situation or relationships.

Compared to North and South Americans as well as Southern Europeans, the British may not **initially** appear to be as open or friendly. Friendships take longer to build; however, once established they tend to be deep and often last over time and distance.

- British communication style is somewhat direct and formal. Communication will be less formal among people who know each other well, but will likely remain more formal than in many other countries
- Physical affection tends to be reserved for the privacy of the home

Notes

- Do not express a lot of emotion or body language while speaking
- There is a proper way to act in most situations. The British tend to respect and follow protocol
- The British are generally particular about the proper use of grammar, both in verbal and written communication. They usually do not use slang or abbreviations and tend to think negatively of others who do not use 'proper' language
- First names are not normally used in written communication, unless you know the person well

Humour

The British sense of humour is very sarcastic and witty. Unlike their reputation for being reserved people, their humour is often dark, abrasive, sarcastic and filled with put-downs. It is common for people to tease and trade insults with one another.

The act of poking fun at someone is often called "taking the piss" out of someone. If you are teased, it is important to take it lightly and not see it as personal.

Gift Giving Etiquette

In general, the British exchange gifts on birthdays and Christmas with family members and close friends.

- A gift does not need to be expensive. It is more important to give something that is thoughtful and personal
- If invited to someone's home, it is customary to bring a box of chocolates, flowers or a bottle of wine
- Gifts are usually opened when received

Dining Etiquette

- If invited to someone's house for dinner or meeting at a restaurant, it is best to arrive on time
- Toasts are often given at formal meals
- Do not rest your elbows on the table
- When in a pub, it is common to pay for a round of drinks for everyone in your group
- If invited to a meal at a restaurant, the person extending the invitation usually pays. Do not argue over the bill, but rather reciprocate at a later time

Notes

Dress

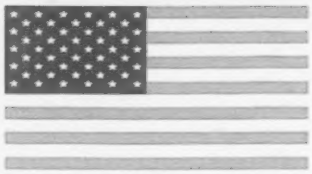
People dress up when going out for dinner or attending an occasion (suits and dresses). Casual wear such as jeans and t-shirts are often worn for leisure activities.

Business Etiquette

- In general, business meetings are formal
- If everyone is at the same level, there is generally a free flow of ideas and opinions
- If there is a senior ranking person in the room, they will do most of the talking
- Be prepared to back up any claims with facts and figures. The British heavily rely on facts to make decisions

Notes

United States



Location and People

The United States of America (U.S.A.) is located on the continent of North America between Canada and Mexico. The U.S.A. is comprised of 50 states and 1 federal district. The country also possesses several territories in the Caribbean and Pacific. With a population over 309 million, the U.S.A. is the third largest country in the world by land area and population. It is also one of the world's most culturally diverse nations – a product of large scale immigration from many countries. Mexico has been the leading source of new residents for over two decades; China, India, and the Philippines have been major sources of immigration every year since 1998.

Not only is the United States populated by people from foreign countries, but all Americans in one way or another trace their ancestry back to another culture, whether Irish, German, Italian or Scottish. Eighty per cent of Americans are White (mainly German, Irish and English ancestry); 13% are African American; 4.5% are Asian American (largely Chinese and Filipino); 1% is Native American and Alaska Native; and 0.2% is Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (2008). The U.S.A. has a significant Hispanic population - approximately 16% of Americans are Hispanic, the majority from Mexico.

Language and Religion

The United States does not have an official language, but English is spoken by approximately 80% of the population as a native language. English spoken in the United States is known as American English; together with Canadian English it makes up the group of dialects known as North American English. Spanish is the second-most common language in the country, spoken by almost 37 million people (or 12% of the population).

Notes

Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in the United States. Approximately 78% of Americans are reported to be Christian (mainly Protestant denominations and Roman Catholic); approximately 5% of Americans are reported to practice non-Christian faiths including Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and Unitarian Universalism; approximately 16% of Americans are reported to be agnostic, atheist, or having no religion.

Industry

The United States is one of the world's leading industrial powers. Major industries include petroleum, steel, motor vehicles, aerospace, telecommunications, chemicals, electronics, food processing, consumer goods, lumber and mining.

Quick Facts:

- The term 'melting pot' is often used to describe the U.S.A. and its many cultures
- There are more than 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S.A.
- Americans are the heaviest television viewers in the world
- Basketball, volleyball, skateboarding, snowboarding and cheerleading were invented in the U.S.A.
- The U.S.A. has won more medals than any other country (2,301 medals) at the Summer Olympic Games; they hold second place with 253 medals for the Winter Olympic Games

Standard of Living

- Quality of Life Index (2005): Ranked 13 out of 111 countries
- Unemployment rate is generally low
- The U.S.A. has the greatest income inequality among developed nations. Despite the low unemployment rate, income gains are not evenly distributed, leaving the wealthy wealthier and the poor poorer
- Gender equality between men and women
- Among developed nations, the U.S.A. has above-average levels of violent crime, particularly high levels of gun violence and homicide. Guns are readily available and legal to own in the U.S.A.

Notes

Sport

Baseball is regarded as the national sport of the United States. American football, basketball and hockey are also very popular sports, both to watch and to play. Golf and auto racing are the most watched individual sports. It is common for youth to participate in recreational sports such as soccer, tennis, volleyball, skateboarding, snowboarding and cheerleading.

Food

American cuisine is similar to that of other Western countries. Traditional foods that were used centuries ago by Native Americans and early European settlers are still popular today. These include turkey, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, squash and maple syrup.

Other typical American foods include:

- Hamburgers and hot dogs
- French fries
- Potato chips
- Chocolate chip cookies
- Apple pie
- Fried chicken
- Pizza
- Caesar salad
- Submarine sandwiches
- Orange juice
- Crab cakes
- Slow cooked pork

Mexican dishes such as burritos and tacos are also very popular, and cuisines such as Louisiana creole, Cajun, and Tex-Mex are popular in certain regions of the country.

Greetings

The basic greeting is a handshake and a hello, accompanied by a smile.

- Handshake with eye contact
- It is important to smile
- Address people by their first names and be sure to introduce everyone to each other

Notes

The Family

The nuclear family is the most widespread family structure in the U.S.A., and is typically small. Extended family relatives live in their own homes, often at great distances from their children.

Individualism is prized, and this is reflected in the family unit. People are proud of their individual accomplishments, initiative and success, and may or may not share those sources of pride with their elders.

Socializing

Americans are generally a very social group of people. They often socialize in their homes and 'backyards', in restaurants and in other public places. It is not unusual for social events to be a backyard barbecue or a picnic in the park.

Other popular forms of socializing are:

- Playing and watching sports
- Recreational activities such as golf, skiing, snowboarding, bowling, billiards and rollerblading
- Celebrating national holidays such as Independence Day, Memorial Day, etc. These celebrations often include parades and fireworks
- Going to a bar or nightclub for drinks and dancing
- Cheerleading
- Marching bands
- Homecoming

An American social tradition is called Homecoming. Every year, usually in late September or early October, people, towns, high schools and colleges come together to welcome back former residents and alumni. Homecoming is built around a central event such as a banquet, parade, and most often, a game of American football with a half-time show featuring cheerleaders and a marching band. Very often, schools will elect and crown a Homecoming Queen and Homecoming King.

Relationships & Communication

The American style of communication is more direct than that of many other cultures. Americans can come across as very strong, blunt and sometimes rude in their communication style. People often blurt out what is on their mind without thinking about how it may impact their interactions with others.

Notes

Americans value logic and linear thinking and expect people to speak clearly and in a straightforward manner. The American mentality is to "tell it how it is". If you don't, it is simply wasting time and time is money (Americans coined this term).

- Americans have a strong sense of national pride that may come across to others as arrogance
- If you are accustomed to a more subtle communication style, try not to be insulted by the level of directness. Try to get your point across quickly and be more direct than you are used to

Gift Giving Etiquette

In general, Americans exchange gifts on birthdays, anniversaries and Christmas.

- Gifts can range from a card or personal note to more elaborate items. The latter are usually reserved for people with whom you are close
- When invited to someone's home for dinner, it is polite to bring a small box of good chocolates, a bottle of wine, or a potted plant or flowers
- Gifts are normally opened when received

Dining Etiquette

- If invited to an American home it is best to be on time
- Table manners are generally relaxed (more so than in many other countries)
- Feel free to refuse specific food or drink without offering an explanation. It is not considered offensive. Many people have dietary restrictions due to health reasons, allergies, etc.
- Many foods are eaten by hand
- Food is often served family-style, which means that it is in large serving dishes and passed around the table for everyone to serve themselves
- Do not begin eating until the host/hostess says to begin
- Do not rest your elbows on the table
- Put your napkin in your lap as soon as you sit down
- Leave a small amount of food on your plate when you have finished eating

Notes

Dress

Generally speaking, Americans are not known for their fashion sense.

- Americans are very casual in their style of dress. Standard western clothing consists of jeans, t-shirts and flip flops (at least when it's warm outside)
- 'Hawaiian shirts' (colourful shirts with floral print) and other 'loud' and colourful clothing is commonly worn
- Even when dressing for a more formal occasion, Americans are known to dress more casual than people in many other countries - especially Europe, a continent known for its keen fashion sense
- Fashion is taken more seriously and trends are more 'chic' in cities such as New York, Miami and San Francisco
- Executives usually dress formally regardless of which part of the country they are in
- Casual Friday is common in many companies, where people wear jeans and other casual clothes to work

Business Meeting Etiquette

- Americans will use the telephone to conduct business that would require a face-to-face meeting in most other countries
- They do not insist upon seeing or getting to know someone before doing business with them
- Arrive on time for meetings. Time and punctuality are important to Americans. In certain parts of the country it can be viewed as a sign of disrespect if someone is late for a meeting or appointment
- Meetings may appear relaxed, but they are taken quite seriously. If there is an agenda, it will be followed. At the conclusion of the meeting, there will be a summary of what was decided, a list of who will implement which facets and a list of the next steps to be taken and by whom
- If making a presentation, it should be direct and to the point. Visual aids and statistics should be used for enhancement
- Business is generally conducted quite rapidly. There is very little small talk before getting down to business
- It is common to attempt to reach an oral agreement at the first meeting. The emphasis is on getting a contract signed rather than building a relationship. The relationship may develop once the first contract has been signed.

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